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Outcome of the Peacebuilding Commission High-level Special Session on Sierra Leone

1. The Governments of Sierra Leone and Canada co-chaired a Peacebuilding Commission High-level Special Session on Sierra Leone. The meeting brought together senior representatives of the member States, the United Nations and civil society.

2. The primary objectives of the Special Session were to provide political support for the implementation of the political parties' joint communiqué, to endorse the Agenda for Change of the Government of Sierra Leone as the core strategic document to guide all future national and international development efforts, to support the United Nations joint vision for Sierra Leone as a new and innovative approach to peacebuilding and to mobilize financial resources for its implementation, and to enhance the coordination and coherence of international support to Sierra Leone's peace consolidation efforts in line with the joint communiqué and the Agenda for Change and in advance of the forthcoming Consultative Group meeting on Sierra Leone.

3. The Special Session underscored the following points. Sierra Leone has made impressive progress towards peace, security and democratic governance since the end of its decade-long civil war in 2002. However, continued national leadership and sustained international support remain critical to overcoming the root causes of the conflict and addressing the emerging threats to Sierra Leone's peace consolidation.

4. In particular, the Special Session agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

(a) *The political parties' joint communiqué*. The Peacebuilding Commission commends the President of Sierra Leone, the leaders of the main political parties as well as all Sierra Leoneans on the adoption of the joint communiqué, on 2 April 2009. The joint communiqué not only successfully ended the sudden outbreak of political violence and intolerance but also charted a way forward for the democratic and peaceful development of the country, and outlined a wider multiparty consensus

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on strengthening key democratic institutions and national policies. With the joint communiqué, Sierra Leone has not only articulated an essential political document to underline its own peacebuilding efforts but has also set an example for conflict prevention and resolution for other countries in similar circumstances;

(b) The Peacebuilding Commission equally commends the President of Sierra Leone and the leaders of the main political parties for the many encouraging steps of reconciliation and dialogue undertaken since the signing of the joint communiqué. The Commission applauds the efforts in the wake of the joint communiqué by Sierra Leone's Inter-faith Council, Association of Journalists, civil society and non-governmental organizations in promoting peace and stability throughout the country. The Commission especially thanks the Artists for Peace for their laudable efforts in communicating the message of peace and tolerance to the youth of Sierra Leone through their music;

(c) The Peacebuilding Commission, moreover, urges all political stakeholders to implement the joint communiqué both in letter and spirit. In particular, the Commission looks forward to the outcomes of the independent review and inquiry that are being set up to investigate the events of March 2009. The Commission urges all parties to work together to further develop and strengthen Sierra Leone's national and democratic institutions, above all the Parliament, the judiciary, the Electoral Commission, the Political Party Registration Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Media Commission and security institutions, including the Sierra Leone police. The Peacebuilding Commission stresses the need for a multiparty consensus to resolve the pressing challenge of youth unemployment, overcome any regional differences, fight illicit drug trafficking and to set up one of the first independent public broadcasting corporations in Africa;

(d) The Peacebuilding Commission calls upon its member States and all development partners of Sierra Leone, and especially on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and the United Nations country team, to assist the Government, the political parties, the local administrations and the various civil society organizations in implementing the joint communiqué. In this context, the Commission welcomes the speedy allocation of US$ 1.8 million from the emergency window of the Peacebuilding Fund in support of the implementation of the agreements of the joint communiqué;

(e) *The Government's Agenda for Change*. The Peacebuilding Commission welcomes the Government's Agenda for Change — the second poverty reduction strategy for Sierra Leone — launched by President Koroma on 20 May 2009. The Agenda for Change is a robust national framework for growth, economic development and peace consolidation. It charts a clear road map for national action and international support;

(f) The Peacebuilding Commission takes note of the strong emphasis in the Agenda for Change on economic growth and the prioritization of agriculture, energy and the development of road infrastructure as necessary preconditions for prompting the private sector, creating jobs and inducing sustained economic growth. Moreover, the Commission welcomes the fact that the Agenda for Change underscores good governance, rule of law, human rights and peace and security as essential prerequisites for peace, sustainable growth and economic development. It supports the Agenda's commitment to ensure peace consolidation by improving national security, reforming the public sector, implementing the national anti-corruption

strategy, improving access to justice and human rights, and promoting positive attitudinal change. The Commission also notes the policy of the Government of Sierra Leone building up strong moral and social values and that the promotion of positive attitudinal change serves as an integral, underpinning theme of the Agenda for Change;

(g) The Peacebuilding Commission calls upon its member States and all international partners to accept the Agenda for Change as the core strategy document that will not only determine the future work of Sierra Leone's national institutions but will also guide all future work of Sierra Leone's international partners. Alignment of all international support with the Agenda for Change will be an important step in streamlining and refocusing the various separate strategies that have been developed over time and will lead to increased national ownership and the effectiveness of international development assistance;

(h) The Peacebuilding Commission calls upon its member States and all development partners of Sierra Leone to realign their respective assistance programmes in support of the Agenda for Change. Moreover, the Commission urges all member States and international partners to maintain and increase their financial support to Sierra Leone and to work with the Government in preparing for the Consultative Group meeting, to be held in London on 18 November 2009;

(i) *United Nations joint vision for Sierra Leone*. The Peacebuilding Commission welcomes the completion of the joint vision for Sierra Leone as the United Nations contribution to the implementation of the Government's Agenda for Change. The Commission commends UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team for articulating a new and innovative approach to peacebuilding in the joint vision. In particular, the Commission endorses the integration of the political mandate of UNIPSIL with the various development and humanitarian mandates of the 17 United Nations agencies that work in Sierra Leone and form the United Nations country team;

(j) The Peacebuilding Commission expresses support for the 21 programmes planned to be implemented under the five priority areas of the joint vision for Sierra Leone. Moreover, it congratulates UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team on taking a common approach to jointly managing regional field offices, promoting an effective outreach initiative, operating a strategic office and managing a number of support services. The Commission urges its member States and all international partners to support the joint vision;

(k) In this context, the Peacebuilding Commission appeals to its member States to provide the necessary financial resources for funding the programmes, projects and activities that are part of the joint vision for Sierra Leone. The Commission welcomes the establishment of a Multi-Donor Trust Fund in support of the joint vision as an effective tool to maximize programme coordination and aid effectiveness. The Commission appeals to all member States to contribute to the Trust Fund and calls in particular upon non-traditional donors without local representation to consider the use of the Trust Fund as an effective channel for contributing to the promotion of peace and stability in Sierra Leone;

(l) *Future engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission*. The Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with Sierra Leone will continue to be based on the core principles of national ownership, mutual accountability and sustained partnership.

The Commission will redouble its efforts to enhance dialogue, broaden the donor base and strengthen relationships between Sierra Leone and its international partners. The Commission will also continue to provide strategic guidance and identify opportunities for follow-up support to critical projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund in Sierra Leone;

(m) The Peacebuilding Commission recalls the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission in December 2007, and decides to align its future engagement with Sierra Leone with the Agenda for Change. In particular, the Commission will focus on the following peacebuilding priorities drawn from the Agenda for Change, which were also highlighted in the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework: promoting good governance and the rule of law; combating illicit drug trafficking; and addressing youth unemployment. In addressing the remaining peacebuilding priorities and emerging threats to peace and security, the Commission will continue to advocate for greater subregional cooperation, including the strengthening of subregional institutions, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union, and the promotion of gender equality and human rights. The present document will form the basis for the future engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with Sierra Leone;

(n) In order to review progress made in Sierra Leone's peace consolidation process and in the implementation of the peacebuilding elements of the Agenda for Change, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government of Sierra Leone will convene six-monthly formal meetings. These meetings will monitor progress on the peacebuilding priorities identified above, focus the attention of the international community on priorities requiring additional action, provide recommendations and advice to all relevant actors on ways to overcome emerging threats and challenges, mobilize additional technical and financial support for the Agenda for Change and the United Nations joint vision for Sierra Leone, and draw good practices and lessons learned from Sierra Leone's experience. The review meetings will be prepared on the basis of progress reports prepared in Sierra Leone by the Government in full consultation with its international partners, and in the context of the Agenda for Change monitoring and evaluation framework. Moreover, the Commission encourages UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team to support the Government's efforts to streamline existing reporting procedures and develop concrete benchmarks to monitor progress in the implementation of the Agenda for Change;

(o) The Peacebuilding Commission reiterates its determination to provide unflagging support to Sierra Leone in its peace consolidation efforts with a view to securing a future that is free from fear and free from want.